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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [MOPS](#) [BA](#) [REGION](#)
SUBJECT: BAHRAINI GOVERNMENT CONDEMNS SAMARRA MOSQUE BOMBING

Classified By: DCM Susan L. Ziadeh for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (U) Foreign Minister Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa June 13 issued a public statement denouncing and condemning the "criminal aggression" on the Samarra mosque earlier the same day. He said that targeting holy and religious places, whether those of Muslims or other faiths, is a brutal crime against the Iraqi people and all humanity. He considered the attack a "cowardly terrorist act" aimed at harming the Iraqi people and the country's unity. Shaikh Khalid called on Iraqis to exert self-control and not be dragged into abhorrent sectarian violence that would further shake the country's stability and security.

¶2. (U) Two processions took place in downtown Manama, a mostly Shia area, the evening of June 13. Hundreds participated in the marches, which were peaceful and well-organized with security forces and local (unarmed) community police providing security. Most of the slogans called on Muslims to unite and denounce terrorism and the "takfeer" mentality (normally used to describe the views of some extremist Sunnis who consider Shias to be infidels). No organization claimed credit for organizing the marches. They appear to have been grassroots expressions of citizens' concern.

¶3. (U) Many religious, political, and civil society organizations issued statements criticizing the attack. All used similar language in denouncing terrorism and calling on Muslims to unite. However, the statements from Shia groups focused on the destructive effect of the takfeer attitude, while Sunni organizations implied that coalition forces (referred to as occupation forces) were at a minimum indirectly responsible for the bombing. A parliamentary deputy representing the Al Asala (Sunni Salafi) political society said publicly that acts like the attack promote the occupation's goal of inciting sectarianism. A Bahraini cleric representing the Al Azhar (Sunni Egyptian) Islamic trend went further, accusing the White House and Iraqi government of being responsible for the attack.

¶4. (U) The only columnist to address the attack was Aqeel Mirza from Al Wasat newspaper, which covers events from a Shia perspective. He says it was neither Sunnis nor Shias who bombed the mosque, implying that coalition forces were responsible. He asserts, "The destruction of the two minarets has nothing to do with Islam and has no other goal but to throw Iraq into a sectarian crematorium to burn the body of Iraq like fire burns wood."

¶5. (C) Comment: The refrain that coalition forces were somehow responsible for the bombing is also something we heard in Bahrain in February 2006. In the aftermath of that attack, Bahrainis held a very large but peaceful demonstration, with both Shias and Sunnis participating, that had as one of its central themes the idea that the United States was to blame. We expect to continue to hear such

charges for the near term.

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